



VETERAN EMPLOYMENT IN SAN DIEGO

A look at military veterans in San
Diego's labor force

Executive Summary



in partnership with



November 8, 2017



San Diego has the largest concentration of military presence in the world with 110,000 active duty personnel. The region has long been largely defined by this military presence, however the connection extends past active duty service, resulting in military veterans accounting for 9.0 percent of the entire San Diego population, and 6.8 percent of the total local civilian labor force. The San Diego regional economy is linked to both the military's presence and the veteran presence here. This report focuses on understanding veterans in the workforce as an existing strength and on the ways that we can leverage that strength by concentrating on demographics, barriers and resources.

Veterans in San Diego: San Diego veterans stand out in terms of age and service era. The younger veteran population (between 18 and 34) is approximately double that of national figures and San Diego veterans served primarily after 2000. In addition to being young, San Diego veterans are also comparatively well-educated. In San Diego County, 80 percent of veterans have some college education, while only 67 percent of non-veterans have some college education or higher.

Veterans in the Workforce: If you compare San Diego County to our competitor metropolitan areas, San Diego ranks highest in veterans in the workforce. Yet, San Diego also faces the second highest veteran unemployment rate. Having the largest percentage of veterans in our workforce does not translate to lower unemployment levels for veterans in San Diego. While the unemployment gap between veterans and nonveterans has closed considerably in recent years, younger veterans have experienced greater unemployment than their non-veteran counterparts.

Barriers and Resources: While veterans face barriers to reintegrating into the civilian workforce, San Diego offers an array of veteran employment resources to support veterans, such as San Diego City Programs and Veteran Entrepreneur Services.

An update to the 2013 Chamber study "Military Employment in San Diego," this report is designed to serve as a tool for San Diego business leaders as we work as a business community to leverage the veteran workforce. San Diego has much to be proud of, both as one of our nation's leading military cities and as a place where veterans enjoy strong employment and opportunity to succeed. However, our community must remain vigilant in maintaining and expanding veteran workforce opportunity, especially with a demographically young veteran population susceptible to high unemployment. In addition to services and resources offered by the public sector and private groups, San Diego's business leaders – many of them veterans themselves – have done great work in empowering older veterans as well as a new generation of future leaders.